

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

5 a first focus adjustment section which adjusts  
a focusing position of the taking lens;

a second focus adjustment section which has  
accuracy lower than that of the first focus adjustment  
section but which adjusts the focusing position of the  
taking lens at a high speed;

10 an imaging section which includes an imager to  
image an object image through the taking lens, and  
converts an output signal of the imager into image  
data;

15 a compressibility setting section which sets  
a compressibility of the image data obtained in the  
imaging section;

a compression section which compresses the image  
data in accordance with the compressibility set in the  
compressibility setting section; and

20 a deciding section which decides one of the  
first focus adjustment section and the second focus  
adjustment section which is employed to carry out  
a final focus adjustment operation of the taking lens  
in accordance with the compressibility set in the  
25 compressibility setting section.

2. The camera according to claim 1,

wherein the first focus adjustment section adjusts

the focusing position of the taking lens by detecting a contrast change of the image data outputted from the imaging section during movement of the taking lens, and

the second focus adjustment section includes  
5 a section to output a signal dependent on a distance of an object, and adjusts the focusing position of the taking lens in accordance with an output result of the section.

3. The camera according to claim 1,  
10 wherein the deciding section selects the first focus adjustment section when a first compressibility is set by the compressibility setting section, and the second focus adjustment section when a second compressibility smaller in compression rate than the  
15 first compressibility is set.

4. The camera according to claim 1,  
wherein the first focus adjustment section carries out a focus adjustment by an imager AF system, and  
the second focus adjustment section carries out  
20 a focus adjustment operation by an external light AF system or a TTL phase difference AF system.

5. A camera comprising:  
a taking lens;  
an imaging section which includes an imager to  
25 image an object image through the taking lens, and converts an output signal of the imager into image data;

a first focus adjustment section which adjusts a focusing position of the taking lens by detecting a contrast change of the image data outputted from the imaging section during movement of the taking lens;

5           a second focus adjustment section which includes a section to output a signal dependent on a distance of an object, and adjusts the focusing position of the taking lens in accordance with an output result of the section;

10           an image processing section which carries out predetermined processing for the image data outputted from the imaging section; and

            a control section which causes one of the first focus adjustment section and the second focus  
15 adjustment section to execute a final focus adjustment operation for the taking lens in accordance with a processing content of the image processing section.

6. The camera according to claim 5,  
            wherein the image processing section includes  
20 a section to compress the image data obtained in the imaging section by a predetermined compressibility, and  
            the control section causes one of the focus adjustment sections to execute a final operation based on the compressibility.

25           7. The camera according to claim 5,  
            wherein the image processing section includes a section to convert the image data obtained in the

imaging section into a predetermined image size, and  
the control section causes one of the focus  
adjustment sections to execute a final operation based  
on the predetermined image size.

5           8. The camera according to claim 5,

wherein the image processing section includes  
a section to carry out edge emphasis processing for  
the image data obtained in the imaging section, and

the control section causes one of the focus  
10 adjustment sections to execute a final operation based  
on presence of the edge emphasis processing.

9. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

an imaging section which includes an imager to  
15 image an object image through the taking lens, and  
converts an output signal of the imager into image  
data;

a compressibility setting section which sets  
a compressibility of the image data obtained in the  
20 imaging section;

a compression section which compresses the image  
data in accordance with the compressibility set in the  
compressibility setting section;

a first focus adjustment section which adjusts  
25 a focusing position of the taking lens by detecting  
a contrast change of the image data outputted from the  
imaging section during movement of the taking lens;

a second focus adjustment section which includes  
a section to output a signal dependent on a distance of  
an object, and adjusts the focusing position of the  
taking lens in accordance with an output result of the  
5 section; and

a control section which operates the second focus  
adjustment section alone when the compressibility set  
in the compressibility setting section is a first  
compressibility, and which operates the first focus  
10 adjustment section after the second focus adjustment  
section when the compressibility is a second  
compressibility lower than the first compressibility.

10. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;  
15 an imager which images an object image through  
the taking lens;

an image processing circuit which generates  
digital image data from an output of the imager, and  
includes a compression circuit to compress the image  
20 data at a compressibility selected from a plurality of  
compressibilities;

a focus adjustment mechanism which adjusts  
a focusing position of the taking lens;

a distance measuring circuit which detects  
25 a distance of an object or a focus deviation amount of  
the taking lens; and

a CPU which receives the output of the imager and

an output of the distance measuring circuit, controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on the received outputs, and decides a control form of the focus adjustment mechanism in accordance with the compressibility selected by the compression circuit.

11. The camera according to claim 10,  
wherein the CPU controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on only the output of the distance measuring circuit when the selected compressibility is a first compressibility, and uses a focus adjustment based on the output of the imager in combination with a focus adjustment based on the output of the distance measuring circuit when the selected compressibility is a second compressibility lower than the first compressibility.

12. The camera according to claim 10,  
wherein the CPU has a first control form to control the focus adjustment mechanism based on a contrast value of the image data outputted from the image processing circuit, and a second control form to control the focus adjustment mechanism based on the output of the distance measuring circuit.

13. A camera comprising:  
a contrast detection section which detects contrast of an object image signal obtained through a taking lens;  
a multipoint distance measuring section which can

range a plurality of points in a photographic screen through a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens;

5 a first focus adjustment section which focuses the taking lens in accordance with a detection result of the contrast detection section;

a second focus adjustment section which focuses the taking lens based on a distance measuring result of the multipoint distance measuring section;

10 a position determination section which determines a position of a main object in the photographing screen from the distance measuring result of the plurality of points; and

15 a selection section which operates the first focus adjustment section when the position determination section determines that the main object is positioned on a center, and which operates the second focus adjustment section when the main object is determined to be positioned on a periphery in the photographing screen.

20

14. A camera comprising:

a first autofocus section which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

25

a second autofocus section which can range a plurality of points in a photographic screen through a pair of optical systems different from the taking

lens, and focuses the taking lens based on a distance measuring result thereof; and

5 a selection section which preferentially operates the second autofocus section when it is determined from the distance measuring result of the plurality of points that a main object is positioned on a periphery in the photographing screen.

15. A camera comprising:

10 a multipoint distance measuring section which ranges a plurality of points in a photographic screen by using an optical system other than a taking lens to obtain a distance to a main object and a position in the photographing screen;

15 a contrast detection section which obtains an object image through a predetermined taking lens, and detects contrast information of the object image; and

20 a control section which focuses the taking lens based on the contrast information detected by the contrast detection section when the multipoint distance measuring section determines that the main object is positioned on a center of the photographic screen.

16. A camera comprising:

25 a determination section which determines a position of a main object in a photographic screen;

a contrast detection section which obtains an object image through a predetermined taking lens, and detects contrast information of the object image; and



a control section which focuses the taking lens based on the contrast information detected by the contrast detection section when the determination section determines that the main object is positioned on a center of the photographic screen.

17. A camera which has a zoom lens in a taking lens, comprising:

a multipoint distance measuring section which ranges a plurality of points in a photographic screen by using an optical system different from the taking lens;

a contrast focusing section which decides a focusing position based on contrast of a photographing target obtained through the taking lens;

a zoom position detection section which detects a zoom position of the taking lens; and

a deciding section which decides whether or not to actuate the contrast focusing section in accordance with the zoom position and a result of the multipoint distance measuring.

18. The camera according to claim 17,

wherein the deciding section executes focusing without actuating the contrast focusing section when the zoom position is on a wide side and, based on the result of the multipoint distance measuring, a main object position is on a screen periphery.

19. A camera comprising:

a first switch turned ON before photographing,  
and a second switch turned ON by an operation of  
a photographing timing;

5 a distance measuring section which measures  
a distance of an object by an optical system different  
from a taking lens by a timing of the first switch; and  
a control section which controls a focusing device  
based on contrast of an image signal obtained through  
the taking lens when a timing of operating the first  
10 switch and a timing of operating the second switch are  
different from each other by predetermined time or  
more, and focuses the taking lens based on an output  
of the distance measuring section when the timing of  
operating the first switch and the timing of operating  
15 the second switch are less than the predetermined time.

20. A camera which has a focus lock button to  
execute focus lock control before photographing,  
comprising:

20 a control section which carries out no focusing  
based on contrast of an image signal obtained through  
a predetermined taking lens when the focus lock button  
is operated, and

carries out focusing based on an output result of  
distance measuring by an optical system different from  
25 the taking lens.

21. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

an imager which images an object image through the taking lens;

an image processing circuit which generates digital image data from an output of the imager;

5 a focus adjustment mechanism which adjusts a focusing position of the taking lens;

a distance measuring optical system;

a distance measuring circuit which detects a distance of an object for a plurality of points in a photographing screen through the distance measuring optical system; and

10

a CPU which receives outputs of at least the image processing circuit and the distance measuring circuit, determines a position of a main object from a plurality of distance measuring results outputted from the distance measuring circuit, and decides a control method of the focus adjustment mechanism in accordance with a result of the determination.

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22. The camera according to claim 21,

20 wherein the CPU has a first control form to control the focus adjustment mechanism based on a contrast value of image data outputted from the image processing circuit, and a second control form to control the focus adjustment mechanism based on the output of the distance measuring circuit, and selects

25 one of the control forms in accordance with the position of the main object.

23. The camera according to claim 22,

wherein the CPU selects the first control form when the main object is positioned on a center of the photographic screen, and the second control form when the main object is positioned on a periphery of the photographing screen.

24. A camera comprising:

a first autofocus section which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

a second autofocus section which focuses the taking lens in accordance with an output of a distance measuring device having a distance measuring optical system different from the taking lens;

a blurring detection section which detects blurring of the camera; and

a selection section which selects one of the first autofocus section and the second autofocus section based on an output of the blurring detection section.

25. A camera comprising:

a distance measuring section which executes distance measuring by obtaining an image signal in a photographic screen through an optical system other than a taking lens, and obtains a main object distance and the image signal; and

a control section which determines a blurring state based on a time change of the image signal

obtained by the distance measuring section, carries out focus control of the taking lens in accordance with a result of the distance measuring when the blurring state is determined, and in accordance with contrast of the object image obtained by the taking lens when no blurring state is determined.

26. A distance measuring device comprising:

a distance measuring section which obtains an image signal in a photographic screen through an optical system other than a taking lens to carry out distance measuring before photographing, and obtains a main object distance and the image signal;

a determination section which determines a blurring state; and

a switching section which switches between execution of distance measuring by the distance measuring section based on the blurring state determined by the determination section and execution of distance measuring based on contrast of the object image obtained by the taking lens.

27. The device according to claim 26,

wherein distance measuring is carried out by the distance measuring section when the determination section determines the blurring state and an influence of blurring.

28. The device according to claim 26,

wherein the determination section determines

blurring based on an output of the distance measuring section.

29. The device according to claim 26,

wherein the determination section determines  
5 blurring based on information regarding a focal distance of the taking lens.

30. A camera which has a zoom lens in a taking lens, comprising:

a distance measuring section which obtains an  
10 object image signal by an optical system different from the taking lens, and measures a distance of an object;

a contrast focusing section which decides a focusing position based on a contrast change obtained by an imaging section through the taking lens during  
15 very small driving of the taking lens;

a zoom position detection section which detects a zoom position of the taking lens; and

a deciding section which decides whether or not to continue the contrast focusing control in accordance  
20 with the zoom position and the image signal by the distance measuring section.

31. The camera according to claim 30,

wherein the deciding section does not continue the operation of the contrast focusing section when the  
25 zoom position is on a wide side and a time change is large in the image signal by the distance measuring section.

32. A distance measuring method of a camera,  
comprising:

5 a first step of focusing a taking lens by a first  
autofocus system based on contact of an object image  
signal obtained through the taking lens;

10 a second step of focusing the taking lens by  
a second autofocus system in accordance with a distance  
measuring result of a distance measuring device which  
has a pair of optical systems different from the taking  
lens;

a third step of detecting a change in the image  
signal used to enable distance measuring in a  
photographic screen of the distance measuring device  
during control of the first autofocus system; and

15 a fourth step of selecting focusing by the second  
autofocus system when the change of the image signal is  
detected.

33. A distance measuring method of a camera,  
comprising:

20 a first step of executing first autofocusing to  
focus a taking lens based on contact of an object image  
signal obtained through the taking lens;

25 a second step of executing second autofocusing to  
focus the taking lens in accordance with a distance  
measuring result of a distance measuring device  
which has a pair of optical systems different from  
the taking lens and can execute distance measuring in

a photographic screen by using the image signal; and

a third step of selecting execution or  
nonexecution of distance measuring by the second  
autofocus system based on a time change in an output of  
5 the first autofocusing.

34. A distance measuring method of a camera,  
comprising:

a first step of obtaining an image signal in a  
photographic screen by using an optical system other  
10 than a taking lens to carry out distance measuring  
before photographing, and obtaining a main object  
distance and the image signal;

a second step of determining a blurring state  
based on a time change in the image signal obtained by  
15 the distance measuring; and

a third step of focusing the taking lens in  
accordance with a result of the distance measuring when  
a blurring state is determined by the determination  
step, and in accordance with contrast of the object  
20 image obtained by the taking lens when no blurring  
state is determined.

35. A distance measuring method comprising:

a first step of obtaining an image signal in a  
photographic screen by using an optical system other  
25 than a taking lens to carry out distance measuring  
before photographing, and obtaining a main object  
distance and the image signal;



a second step of determining a blurring state; and  
a third step of switching between execution of  
distance measuring based on the blurring state  
determined by the second step and execution of distance  
measuring based on contrast of the object image  
obtained by the taking lens.

36. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

an imager which images an object image through the  
taking lens;

an image processing circuit which generates  
digital image data from an output of the imager;

a focus adjustment mechanism which adjusts  
a focusing position of the taking lens;

a distance measuring optical system different from  
the taking lens;

a distance measuring circuit which detects a  
distance of an object through the distance measuring  
optical system, and includes a distance measuring  
sensor to detect a partial object image in a  
photographic screen; and

a CPU which controls the focus adjustment  
mechanism based on an output of the imager, determines  
a blurring state from an output signal of the distance  
measuring sensor, and cancels a focus adjustment  
operation based on the output of the imager when the  
amount of blurring is large.

37. The camera according to claim 36,

wherein the CPU controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on the output of the distance measuring sensor in place of the focus adjustment operation based on the output of the imager when the amount of blurring is large.

38. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

an imager which images an object image through the taking lens;

an image processing circuit which generates digital image data from an output of the imager;

a focus adjustment mechanism which adjusts a focusing position of the taking lens;

a distance measuring optical system different from the taking lens;

a distance measuring circuit which detects a distance of an object through the distance measuring optical system, and includes a distance measuring sensor to detect a partial object image in a photographic screen; and

a CPU which controls the focus adjustment mechanism to control a focus of the taking lens, determines presence of blurring based on an output signal of the distance measuring sensor, executes focus control of the taking lens based on the output of the imager when no blurring is present, and based

on an output of the distance measuring circuit when blurring is present.

39. A camera comprising:

5       a first autofocus system which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens; and

10       a second autofocus section which focuses the taking lens in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device having a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens,

15       wherein the distance measuring device can range a plurality of points in a photographic screen, and comprises a selection section which preferentially carries out focusing by the second autofocus system when a main object and other objects are determined to be in a predetermined distance range based on a distance measuring result of the plurality of points.

40. A camera comprising:

20       a first autofocus system which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

25       a second autofocus section which focuses the taking lens in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device having a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens,

      wherein the distance measuring section can range a plurality of points in a photographic screen, and

comprises a switching section to carry out distance measuring by switching between the first autofocus system and the second autofocus system.

41. A camera comprising:

5           a multipoint distance measuring section which ranges a plurality of points by using an optical system other than a taking lens to obtain a main object distance and a position in a screen before photographing; and

10           a control section which carries out focus control of the taking lens in accordance with a result of the distance measuring when the multipoint distance measuring section determines that the main object is present at a distance not different from those of other  
15           objects, and in accordance with contrast of the object image obtained by the taking lens when the main object is determined to be present at a distance far from the other objects.

20           42. A camera which has a zoom lens in a taking lens, comprising:

          a multipoint distance measuring section which measures distances of a plurality of points in a screen by an optical system different from the taking lens;

25           a contrast focusing section which decides a focusing position based on contrast of an imaging section obtained through the taking lens;

          a zoom position detection section which detects

a zoom position of the taking lens; and

a deciding section which decides whether or not to actuate the contrast focusing control in accordance with the zoom position and a relation between a main  
5 object and a background based on a result of the multipoint distance measuring section.

43. The camera according to claim 42,

wherein the deciding section does not actuate the contrast focusing section even when the zoom position  
10 is on a wide side and a distance of the main object and a distance of the background are different from each other based on a result of the multipoint distance measuring, and carries out focusing based on the result of the multipoint distance measuring.

15 44. A camera comprising:

a first autofocus system which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens; and

a second autofocus section which focuses the  
20 taking lens in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device having a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens,

wherein the distance measuring device can range a plurality of points in accordance with image signals of  
25 the plurality of points in a photographic screen, and

comprises a differentiation section to obtain differentiation data of the image signals, and

a selection section which preferentially carries out focusing by the second autofocus system when the differentiation information is higher than a predetermined level.

5           45. A camera comprising:

          a first autofocus system which focuses a taking lens based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

          a second autofocus section which focuses the  
10       taking lens in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device having a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens,

          wherein the distance measuring section can range a plurality of points in accordance with image signals of  
15       the plurality of points in a photographic screen, and

          comprises a determination section to detect contrast information in the photographic screen, and to determine a size of the contrast, and

          a switching section to switch between the first  
20       autofocus system and the second autofocus system based on a result of the determination section.

          46. The camera according to claim 45,

          wherein the determination section determines the contrast in the photographic screen based on an output  
25       of the first autofocus system.

          47. The camera according to claim 45,

          further comprising a photometry section which

divides the photographic screen into a plurality of areas, and carries out brightness photometry for each area,

5 wherein the determination section determines the contrast in the photographic screen based on photometry information of the plurality of areas by the photometry section.

48. A distance measuring method of a camera which has a zoom lens in a taking lens, comprising:

10 a first step of executing multipoint distance measuring to measure distances of a plurality of points in a screen by an optical system different from the taking lens;

15 a second step of deciding a focusing position based on contrast of a photographed image obtained through the taking lens;

a third step of detecting a zoom position of the taking lens; and

20 a fourth step of deciding whether or not to actuate contrast focusing to decide the focusing position based on the zoom position and a relation between distances of a main object and a background in accordance with a result of the multipoint distance measuring.

25 49. The distance measuring method according to claim 48,

wherein the fourth step of deciding the actuation

does not actuate the contrast focusing even when the zoom position is on a wide side, and the distances of the main object and the background are different from each other based on a result of the multipoint distance measuring, and executes focusing based on the result of the multipoint distance measuring.

50. A distance measuring method of a camera, comprising:

a step of focusing a taking lens by a first autofocus system based on contact of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

a step of focusing the taking lens by a second autofocus system in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device which has a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens, and which can range a plurality of points in accordance with image signals of the plurality of points in a photographic screen;

a step of obtaining differentiation information of the image signals; and

a step of making selection to preferentially execute focusing by the third autofocus system when the differentiation information is higher than a predetermined level.

51. A distance measuring method of a camera, comprising:

a step of focusing a taking lens by a first



autofocus system based on contrast of an object image signal obtained through the taking lens;

5 a step of focusing the taking lens by a second autofocus system in accordance with a distance measuring result of a distance measuring device which has a pair of optical systems different from the taking lens, and which can range a plurality of points in accordance with image signals of the plurality of points in a photographic screen;

10 a step of detecting contrast information in the photographic screen, and determining a size of the contrast; and

a step of switching between the first autofocus system and the second autofocus system based on a result of the determination.

52. A camera comprising:

a taking lens;

an imager which images an object image through the taking lens;

20 an image processing circuit which generates digital image data from an output of the imager;

a focus adjustment mechanism which adjusts a focusing position of the taking lens;

a distance measuring optical system;

25 a distance measuring circuit which detects a distance of an object for a plurality of points in a photographic screen; and

a CPU which receives outputs of at least the image processing circuit and the distance measuring circuit, and controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on the received outputs, determines a distance relation  
5 between a main object position and a background from a plurality of distance measuring results outputted from the distance measuring circuit, and decides a control method of the focus adjustment mechanism in accordance with a result of the determination.

10 53. The camera according to claim 52,  
wherein the control method by the CPU includes a first control method which controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on a contrast value of image data outputted from the image processing circuit, and  
15 a second control method which controls the focus adjustment mechanism based on an output of the distance measuring circuit.

54. The camera according to claim 52,  
wherein the CPU controls the focus adjustment  
20 mechanism based on a contrast value of image data outputted from the image processing circuit when a difference between the main object distance and a distance of another object is large, and based on an output of the distance measuring circuit when the  
25 difference is small.